(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) to what extent, the France Telecom has agreed to invest in this sector?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) There is no proposal pending at present for the investment by France Telecom in Indian cellular telephone sector.

(b) to (e) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Setting up of common international gateway in India

5272. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has mooted a proposal to set up a common international gateway in India that could connect all the Asian countries to the global internet;

(b) if so, whether the financial assistance for the project has been sought from the Development Gateway Fund of the World Bank;

(c) whether the proposal is a corollary to the recommendation made by the United Nation's ICT Task Force for bridging the digital divide; and

(d) if so, by when, a final decision in this regard is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) to (d) World Bank has set up Development Gateway Foundation with objective to focus on bridging the digital divide and promote sustainable development and poverty reduction.

India has become one of the founder members of the Foundation. A Research and Training Centre of the Foundation has been proposed to be set up in India in order to achieve the above objective.

The proposed Research and Training Centre of the Development Gateway Foundation is expected to become operational by the end of financial year 2002-03.